

Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
179th Quarterly Commission Meeting
October 27, 2023
Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, 200 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeannie Taylor, Tommy Evans, Melissa Kelly, Alexander Ansley, Beth Brinly, Barbie Harris, Amy Hatzel, Sarah Roof, Michelle Niehaus, Edie Ryan, Eddie Runyon, Jason Smith (for Dodie Karr)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Marva Johnson, Gerry Gordon-Brown

STAFF PRESENT: Blake Campbell, Justin Stanley, Jayna Oakley, Anita Dowd, Rodney Smith

COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS: Laura Kogut, Linda Bozeman

VISITORS: Jessica Myers, Vanessa Johns, Row Holloway, John Perry

MR. EVANS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE 178TH EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMISSION MEETING. MS. PERRY SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED WITHOUT DISCUSSION.

REPORTS

Executive Board Report

Ms. Taylor gave the executive board report for Dr. Evans, who was present via videoconference. First, the Commission recognized outgoing Commissioner Eddie Runyon's service, with Ms. Taylor, Mr. Evans, Ms. Hatzel, and Ms. Perry thanking Mr. Runyon individually. Ms. Taylor also recognized KCDHH staff member Jayna Oakley for her service and noted that she would be retiring following the next Commission meeting.

Ms. Taylor reported that the Executive Director Search Committee continues to make progress. The Committee decided to allow the job posting to expire on October 28, 2023, in light of the applications received up to this point in the process. Dr. Evans noted that the Committee was on pace with its original timeline, which called for a new Executive Director to be chosen by the New Year. Ms. Hatzel noted that there would still be an opportunity for all KCDHH's constituents to have input on new leadership and urged all members to make their constituent groups aware of the call for input.

Next, Ms. Taylor noted that there are currently two vacancies on the Commission—one reserved for the AARP representative and one for the Kentucky Association of the Deaf. The AARP representative is to be nominated by the Governor, who is currently campaigning for reelection and so may be delayed, but the KAD has agreed to allow Barbie Harris to continue to serve until a successor may be nominated. Ms. Harris intends to apply for re-nomination. Finally, Dr. Evans announced that he has initiated the creation of a shared cloud drive for the Search Committee to streamline information sharing.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Agency Report

Ms. Dowd gave the Agency Report as Interim Executive Director.

First, Ms. Dowd noted that the two Commission vacancies had already been filled, but the appointments were not yet formal. She also asked Commissioners to watch KCDHH's social media considering the recent mass shooting in Maine, because some events to honor the victims were forthcoming.

Next, Ms. Dowd announced that KCDHH is working with the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to introduce the Virginia Moore Deaf Child's Bill of Rights during the next General Assembly. This is KCDHH's first time working with the Cabinet to create draft legislation, so the process has been different, but the Cabinet's expertise has been welcome. Ms. Dowd noted that this legislation does exist in other jurisdictions, but that it sometimes excludes Deaf-Blind children, which she wants to make sure is not the case in Kentucky.

Ms. Dowd reported that the Cabinet, via Secretary Link and Ms. Brinly, has adopted the guide to hiring Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HOH) employees that was written by Jessica Endler-Smith, KCDHH's TAP Coordinator, after attending the Cabinet's Emerging Leaders program. Ms. Dowd and Ms. Endler-Smith were subsequently able to attend the Cabinet's Workforce Inclusion Summit, which included a panel discussion pertaining to the guide. Ms. Dowd also met with the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce concerning employment of KCDHH constituents, and with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation about holding a job fair for constituents on years when DeaFestival does not occur.

Mr. Runyon noted that an organization called SOAR is active in looking for ways to grow the economy in Appalachian Kentucky, and that it may be helpful to contact them while pursuing new employment opportunities for D/HOH individuals. Ms. Harris noted that KSD and Gallaudet University both had mentoring programs for students and employers during her time at those institutions and suggested that they could be expanded to serve KCDHH constituencies.

Next, Ms. Dowd reported that she had met with the National Weather Service in Louisville. The Service was concerned about providing accessible weather information to the D/HOH. Ms. Dowd was impressed by their proactive approach and has already planned further collaboration between the agencies.

Finally, Ms. Dowd reported she had twice met with KDE Commissioner Glass before he left office regarding the selection process for KSD Principal. She feels that the increased educational and professional opportunities for the D/HOH community has resulted in fewer D/HOH people choosing a career in education, which necessitates a national search. She has since been in touch with the interim KDE Commissioner. Ms. Ryan asked what the best way for Commissioners to help the hiring process is, and Ms. Dowd answered that the best way is to make the opening as widely known as possible.

Ms. Dowd also noted that the Transportation Cabinet had contacted her to notify KCDHH that a poster informing D/HOH drivers of their option to receive special license plates had been finalized and approved for distribution in the new year.

THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Emergency Preparedness Study Group Report

Ms. Harris delivered the Emergency Preparedness Study Group report.

Ms. Harris reported that she hopes to meet with Ms. Dowd and Blake Campbell at KCDHH regarding their progress with Kentucky Emergency Management. She hopes to use the Study Group to survey the D/HOH community in Kentucky about how they experience emergency services and weather alerts, and where they feel those services can improve.

THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STUDY GROUP REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

Old Business

Ms. Taylor then asked the Commission to consider old business.

The only item of old business was the process for filling vacant Commission seats with multiple applications. Dr. Evans reported that he and Jayna Oakley had been working directly with Fiorella Salazar at the Governor's office, who informed them that there was no set process for the Governor's appointments—the Governor has discretion to choose whoever they see fit.

New Business

Moving on to new business, Ms. Taylor noted that the first item for consideration was Commission meeting dates and times for January and April. The January meeting will occur via videoconference, and the April meeting will be in-person. The Executive Board will continue to meet on the last Friday of the month, but those meetings will be from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm rather than the previous times of 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. This is chiefly to ensure that the Commission is out of the Transportation Cabinet offices before they close at 4:30 pm.

MS. BRINLY MOVED TO ACCEPT THE NEW MEETING TIMES. MR. SMITH SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH NO FURTHER DISCUSSION.

Ms. Taylor then recognized Ms. Dowd to discuss the KCDHH Strategic Plan.

Ms. Dowd noted that she would like to make some changes to the presentation of the Strategic Plan to bring it into line with current industry standards, namely through adding more visual materials to its presentation. She noted that Commissioners will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan's goals at the December Executive Board meeting.

Ms. Taylor asked if the Commissioners could provide staff with any further resources to meet the goals of the existing Strategic Plan. Ms. Dowd replied that the goals that had not been met up to this point were a result of illness among staff members. Ms. Taylor replied that the Commission's concern was that Ms. Dowd and the KCDHH staff had the resources they needed to be successful.

Ms. Ryan asked if there was a list of KCDHH employees and their job duties so that Commissioners would know who was responsible for what areas. Ms. Taylor replied that Commissioners should start their contact with the staff via Rodney Smith. Ms. Hatzel pointed out that the KCDHH website lists staff and their areas of responsibility. Ms. Dowd directed the Commissioners to an organizational chart in their meeting materials that further describes KCDHH's staff structure.

Ms. Hatzel noted that the Kentucky Board of Interpreters has several vacancies and noted that any Deaf person can fill a vacant at-large position if they are a member of the Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.

Ms. Roof reported that she serves as a co-chair on the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Board. There will be an EHDI Summit in 2024 to discuss issues around early intervention with parents and professionals. The Board is also working to ensure hospitals are complying with required CMV screenings. EHDI has also begun to refer parents directly to Kentucky Hands & Voices.

Ms. Perry suggested that KCDHH create VLOGs to make constituents aware of the positions of political parties considering upcoming elections. Ms. Hatzel agreed that this would be a good service for KCDHH to provide.

Announcements

- The next Executive Board meeting will be held on December 8, 2023, from 1 pm to 3 pm via videoconference.
 - The next Commission meeting will be held on January 26, 2024, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm, in person at the Transportation Cabinet.
 - The Kentucky School for the Deaf Alumni Association is having a 5K run/walk in honor of a long-time physical education teacher at KSD from 2 pm to 5 pm on November 4, in Danville.
 - The Community Impact Council is having a listening session on November 17 specifically for feedback from D/HOH people.
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MR. ANSLEY MOVED TO ADJOURN. MS. RYAN SECONDED. The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 pm.